

# Expanding Housing Choices



## Purpose

Fast-paced population growth, limited availability of developable tracts, and a renewed preference for in-town living has led to a **housing availability and affordability** challenge for Durham.

Over time, zoning rules have restricted development in many neighborhoods **almost exclusively to single-family dwellings**, eliminating many of the small-scale and often more affordable options that once existed.

Expanding Housing Choices is a project that explores ways to **eliminate barriers and expand the choices** people have when it comes to housing options.

One approach is to **review and amend the zoning ordinance** (local rules that regulate different aspects of land use and development), officially named the *Unified Development Ordinance* (UDO). Amending the UDO is a legislative process called a Text Amendment.

Following the direction of the City Council and Board of County Commissioners, the Planning Department has created a **Discussion Draft**, or a **menu of proposals for input and feedback**. The proposals are aimed at allowing a wider range of housing options for new neighborhoods or that can be integrated contextually into existing neighborhoods.

## Project Objectives

Expand the **menu of housing types** to meet a diverse set of needs.

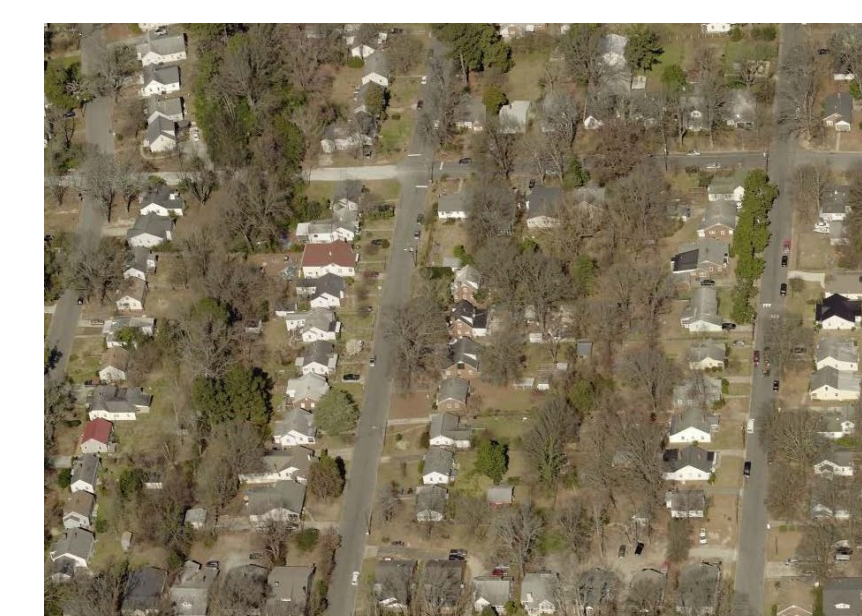
Over the long-term, potentially help stabilize housing prices by expanding the supply of housing to **keep pace with the rate of population and job growth**.

Create opportunity for **creative infill**, particularly where demand for housing is high.

Focus on **small scale housing**.

Balance densification with **context-sensitive** development.

**Streamline processes** by making choices allowable without special approvals.



## Proposals

### Infill Standards

Modify residential infill standards to promote more context-sensitive development while not prohibiting other proposals.

### Accessory Dwelling Units

Modify UDO regulations to increase viability for more properties.

### Duplexes

Allow duplexes as a housing type in more locations, especially within the Urban Tier.

### Lot Dimensions and Density

Adjust lot dimensional standards to allow more opportunities for small-scale infill.

### Small House/Small Lot

Create a new housing type/lot dimensional standard to accommodate small houses, including versions for a **Small House Pocket Neighborhood** (clusters of small homes built around a common green space) and **Small Flag Lots**.

## Trade-offs with These Proposals

The draft proposals presented for discussion do not come without potential impacts and trade-offs regarding other equally important issues. As you'll see in the posters and handouts, staff has attempted to mitigate some of these impacts.

- Impact to the tree canopy
- More impervious surface
- Parking congestion
- Teardowns
- Change to neighborhood character or “feel”

## Part of a Toolbox of Approaches

Zoning regulations can play a part in the affordability and attainability of housing, but other strategies need to be employed, and are being explored by the City and County including, but not limited to:

- Utilization of City and County properties
- Programs addressing evictions
- Homeowner education focusing on rights and understanding property value
- Preservation of currently affordable housing
- Accessory dwelling unit how-to manual
- Re-consideration of certain City fees

## Issues Outside of Governmental Control

The City and County can control certain aspects of development, but other aspects are beyond control (or at best very limited).

- Location desirability
- Cost of land
- Cost of labor
- Cost of materials
- Regulation of aesthetic design of single family and two-family structures (limited exceptions that include historic districts)